during interrogation of accused persons. However, the Union Government has been issuing guidelines to the State Governments, from time to time, emphasising that the police personnel should conduct themselves in a humane manner and that cases of police excesses should be taken serious note of and dealt with promptly and firmly. Human Rights as a subject has also been included in the training curricula of police personnel.

Privatisation of Balco

†1453. SHRI LAKHIRAM AGARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to privatise the Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd., Korba;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the said company is running in loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) to (c) The Disinvestment Commission has recommended that 51% of Government equity in BALCO may be disinvested in favour of a strategic buyer along with transfer of management control. The recommendation has been accepted by the Government. BALCO is a profit making company.

Diamond Mines in the Country

†1454. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise number of diamond mines in the country;

(b) the State-wise quantity of diamonds received from these mines during the last three years;

(c) the places in the country where new diamond-reserve areas have been found; and

(d) the details of time and States in which mining has started in these new diamond areas alongwith quantity and value of diamonds mined from such mines?

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) There are two mines reporting production of diamond which are located in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh.

(b) The production of diamonds from the above mines during the last three years is as follows:—

(Quantity in carats)

1996-97	1997-98	1998-99 (Provisional)
31836	30994	34579

(c) The presence of diamond indicator minerals has been observed by the Geological Survey of India in Bahrahdi, Payalikhand area in Raipur district, Duganpal, Bhajripadar and Parakot areas in Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh and Krishna-gravels in Krishna, Guntur, Cuddapah and Prakasam districts in Andhra Pradesh. Exploration in these areas is in progress.

(d) No mining lease for diamond has been granted in the areas indicated in part (c) and hence the question of commencement of mining operations does not arise.

Royalty on Diamond

†1455. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have reduced the rate of royalty on diamond from 20% to 10%;

(b) whether Madhya Pradesh Government has urged the Central Government to restore 20% royalty rate on diamond; and

(c) if so, by when the rate of 20% royalty on diamond is likely to be restored?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) to (c) The rate of royalty on diamond was reduced from 20 percent of the sale price at

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.